

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Ralph DLG Torres  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Caller Box 10007  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

Thank you for recognizing yesterday that the coronavirus requires a significant change in behavior by all of us in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Pursuant to your directive and consistent with the recommendation of the Committee on House Administration that congressional offices follow the guidance of state health departments, I am also closing our physical offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. I have instructed congressional staff to provide constituent services by electronic means to the maximum extent possible.

Respectfully, I would also take this opportunity to suggest that, as Governor, you request the President to make a major disaster declaration for the Northern Mariana Islands. A gubernatorial request for a major disaster declaration is a process with which, unfortunately, you are experienced. COVID-19 is as much a natural catastrophe as any typhoon; and the economic impact of this virus on our islands is fully apparent.

Although the President has declared a health emergency nationwide, a Presidential declaration of a major disaster for the Northern Marianas will release considerably greater federal resources to aid the Commonwealth government and the people we serve.

Thank you for considering this suggestion.

Let me assure you, too, that I continue to work to include assistance for the Marianas in every legislative response to the coronavirus taken by Congress. The Commonwealth has already been allocated health care funding from the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020, which we passed on March 4 and the President signed March 6.

The House-passed Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which is now with the Senate and the President has said he will sign, responds to the health and economic impacts with additional Medicaid funding for the Marianas at a reduced local match and \$100 million specifically for the nutrition assistance programs in the Marianas, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico. The Act also includes tax credits for businesses to provide paid leave for workers who fall ill or must care for family members – credits underwritten by a cover-over from the U.S. Treasury to the Commonwealth.

The U.S. House of Representatives has already begun formulating a third package of financial responses to deal with this crisis; and I encourage you to provide any specific suggestions you may have, especially for measures that support the travel industry, which is so vital to the Marianas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kilili', with a stylized flourish at the end.

GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Governor  
The Honorable Victor Borja Hocog, President of the Senate  
The Honorable Blas Jonathan Tenorio Attao, Speaker of the House